

in cattle. Finally, language was included to again urge the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, APHIS, to indemnify a Connecticut poultry producer who undertook a successful emergency vaccination protocol 2 years ago.

So while I am pleased that there are a few items specifically for my constituents, I remain deeply troubled by the path this Congress is taking as it tries to cut spending for programs that benefit our most vulnerable populations while at the same time planning for tax cuts for the most wealthy, who neither need nor, on the whole, seek the extravagance that the majority insists on heaping upon them.

The Senate conferees are to be commended for pushing hard for increases in food and nutrition programs, including the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program, but at the same time, House conferees insisted on the option of privatization of the food stamp process. That is often code word for closing down local centers and relying more and more on remote call centers and the Internet. This puts a disproportionate burden on those people who need the services most. I know that in my State of Connecticut, this action could adversely impact 109,250 households and that number is likely to grow. Unfortunately, the Republican-controlled Congress often sees privatization as the panacea for saving money. Instead, studies often find that contracting out these services often costs more money. But the problem doesn't stop there. As Congress moves forward with the budget reconciliation process, we will have to come to terms with the fact that the House has insisted on draconian cuts of nearly a billion dollars in the food stamp program. If this number were to stand, nearly 300,000 low-income individuals could be denied benefits. The majority in Congress refuses to increase the minimum wage. It refuses to increase low-income heating assistance, despite dire predictions of record heating costs this winter. Now Congress is on the verge of cutting off 300,000 people from food assistance. Such a move is irresponsible, and it is unconscionable.

Finally, the House conferees insisted on denying American consumers with simple information about the meat they eat. As our colleagues know, mandatory meat labeling was included in the 2002 farm bill, which I supported. The labeling of seafood already started but meat labeling, at the behest of a few powerful lobbyists and a few Members of Congress, continues to be delayed. Hundreds of organizations around the country, including farmers, producers, consumer groups, and individuals overwhelmingly support country-of-origin labeling, COOL. The fiscal year 2006 House appropriations bill effectively delayed meat labeling by refusing to allow any funds to be used to implement COOL, while the Senate bill did not change the requirement. During conference on this bill, the House,

with no consultation with the Senate and with no vote, unilaterally extended the COOL delay until 2008, beyond what even the House language did. Labeling would increase consumer confidence and assist agricultural producers.

So, while there are many laudable provisions in the agricultural appropriations bill, several provisions caused me to cast a vote against this bill.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:35 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Branden, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1285. An act to designate the Federal building located at 333 Mt. Elliott Street in Detroit, Michigan, as the "Rosa Parks Federal Building".

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1691. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Appleton, Wisconsin, as the "John H. Bradley Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

H.R. 4061. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the management of information technology within the Department of Veterans Affairs by providing for the Chief Information Officer of that Department to have authority over resources, budget, and personnel related to the support function of information technology, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 281. Concurrent resolution congratulating the Chicago White Sox on winning the 2005 World Series.

The message also announced that the House disagree to the amendments of the Senate to the bill H.R. 2528 making appropriations for military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon; and

appoints the following members as the managers of the conference on the part of the House: Mr. WALSH, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mrs. NORTHUP, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REHBERG, Mr. CARTER, Mr. LEWIS of California, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. FARR, Mr. BOYD, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. OBEY.

The message further announced that the House disagree to the amendments of the Senate to the bill H.R. 2862 making appropriations for Science, the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon; and appoints the following members as the managers of the conference on the part of the House: Mr. WOLF, Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina, Mr. KIRK, Mr. WELDON of Florida, Mr. GOODE, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. LEWIS of California, Mr. MOLLOHAN, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. FATTAH, and Mr. OBEY.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 491 of the Higher Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1098(c)), the order of the House of January 4, 2005, and upon the recommendation of the Majority Leader, the Speaker reappoints the following member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance for a three-year term: Ms. Judith Flink of Morton Grove, Illinois.

#### ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 11:37 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following bill:

H.R. 2744. An act making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was signed subsequently by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

At 12:46 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Chiappardi, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House disagree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill H.R. 889 to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2006, to make technical corrections to various laws administered by the Coast Guard, and for other purposes, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon; and appoints the following members as the managers of the conference on the part of the House from the committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for consideration of the House bill and the Senate amendment, and modifications

committed to conference: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. COBLE, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. SIMMONS, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. FILNER, Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi, Mr. HIGGINS, and Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania.

From the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for consideration of section 408 of the House bill, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. BARTON of Texas, Mr. GILLMOR, and Mr. DINGELL.

The message also announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the Senate to the bill H.R. 3057 making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4128. An act to protect private property rights.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1691. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Appleton, Wisconsin as the "John H. Bradley Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 4061. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the management of information technology within the Department of Veterans Affairs by providing for the Chief Information Officer of that Department to have authority over resources, budget, and personnel related to the support function of information technology, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 4128. An act to protect private property rights; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

#### MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 1960. A bill to protect the health and safety of all athletes, to promote the integrity of professional sports by establishing minimum standards for the testing of steroids and other performance-enhancing substances and methods by professional sports leagues, and for other purposes.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. LUGAR, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment:

S. 1184. A bill to waive the passport fees for a relative of a deceased member of the Armed Forces proceeding abroad to visit the grave of such member or to attend a funeral or memorial service for such member.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BIDEN (for himself and Mr. HATCH):

S. 1961. A bill to extend and expand the Child Safety Pilot Program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, and Mr. BROWNBACK):

S. 1962. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to revise certain repayment contracts with the Bostwick Irrigation District in Nebraska, the Kansas Bostwick Irrigation District No. 2, the Frenchman-Cambridge Irrigation District, and the Webster Irrigation District No. 4, all a part of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BAUCUS:

S. 1963. A bill to make miscellaneous improvements to trade adjustment assistance; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 1964. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the determination and deduction of interest on qualified education loans; to the Committee on Finance.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 832

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 832, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide taxpayer protection and assistance, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 273

At the request of Mr. COLEMAN, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 273, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United Nations and other international organizations shall not be allowed to exercise control over the Internet.

S. RES. 299

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. CORZINE), the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 299, a resolution to express support for the goals of National Adoption Month by promoting national awareness of adoption, celebrating children and families involved in adoption, and encouraging Americans to secure safety, permanency, and well-being for all children.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BIDEN (for himself and Mr. HATCH):

S. 1961. A bill to extend and expand the Child Safety Pilot Program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Extending the Child Safety Pilot Program Act of 2005, along with my good friend Senator HATCH.

At the outset, let me thank Senator HATCH and his staff for joining with me in this effort. I can think of no stronger advocate for children's safety than my friend from Utah, and I am so pleased to have him as an original cosponsor of this bill.

When a mom drops her young son or daughter off at the local Boys & Girls Club, when a dad brings his child to little league practice, or when one of our kids is mentored by an older member of the community, we hope and pray that they are going to be safe. They usually are, and youth-serving organizations are constantly vetting new employees and volunteers to ensure there's nothing in their background to indicate that potential workers should not be around our kids.

But these groups can only do so much. They send information and fingerprints on prospective workers to their State criminal identification agencies, and that effort typically results in a comprehensive search of criminal history information on file in the State where the organization is established. But if the worker spent time in another state, or if a State's records are not up to date, kids' safety can be put in jeopardy.

The organization with the most complete set of national criminal history information is the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division, in Clarksburg, West Virginia. Years ago, I was approached by the Boys & Girls Clubs and others and asked whether there would be a way for them to directly access CJIS' records and avoid the then-cumbersome system requiring them to apply for these national background checks through their States.

I looked into the issue and discovered that a patchwork of statutes and regulations govern background checks at the State level. There are over 1,200 State statutes concerning criminal record checks. In different States, different agencies are authorized to perform background checks for different types of organizations, distinct forms and information are required, and the results are returned in various formats that can be difficult to interpret. Youth-serving organizations trying to do the right thing and keep the kids in their charge safe were being forced to navigate an extremely cumbersome system.

Indeed, in 1998, the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division performed an analysis of fingerprints submitted for civil applicant purposes. CJIS found that the average transmission time from the point of fingerprint to the State bureau was 51.0 days, and from the State bureau to the FBI was another 66.6 days, for a total of 117.6 days from fingerprinting to receipt by the FBI. The worst performing jurisdiction took 544.8 days from